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The Great Divergence Reconsidered: Europe, India, and the Rise to Global Economic Power

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over many decades for aboriginal Kulin people in Victoria, she also acquired huge tracts of their land.

The volume is somewhat unbalanced in terms of its national coverage. The book includes four articles on Australia, three on Canada, two on South Africa, and one each on New Zealand and the U.S. More attention to New Zealand and the U.S. would be welcome, especially since U.S. historians have lagged in analyzing the nation's settler colonial past.

The best essays in the volume take pains to link the processes they describe to other colonial contexts. Angela Wanhalla, for example, observes how settler colonialism took a much less draconian form in New Zealand. Residents on the Taieri Native Reserve were not subject to surveillance nor restricted to the reserve as she notes was the case for so many Indigenous subjects in the U.S., Australia, and Canada.

Many of the essays in the volume consider how these histories continue to exert influence today. The chapter by Julie Evans and Giordano Nanni on Coranderrk shows that when the Kulin brought their land claim to court in Victoria, Australia, in 1998, a judge relied on the nostalgic memoir of Edward Curr, a settler who had blatantly dispossessed the Kulin, as evidence that the Kulin had not continuously occupied their land, and thus were not eligible to reclaim it.

It is hard not to get angry while reading this volume. Author after author uncovers a confounding pattern—Indigenous communities adapting to a new set of rules, winning the game, and then settler societies changing the rulebook. As Sarah Carter sums up, “it was profitable to insist that Aboriginal people were incapable of agriculturalists . . . despite clear evidence to the contrary” (175).

By shuttling between the global and the local, this volume accomplishes something quite extraordinary. It shows us the power and hegemony of settler colonial institutions in the late nineteenth century at the same time as it uncovers the rich local histories of how Indigenous people confronted dispossession and displacement.

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PHILIP T. HOFFMAN. *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?* (The Princeton Economic History of the Western World.) Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015. Pp. 272. \$29.95.

ROMAN STUDER. *The Great Divergence Reconsidered: Europe, India, and the Rise to Global Economic Power.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. xii, 231. \$99.00.

Global history and large-scale comparative history now enjoy a place of prominence in a discipline that for a generation has been dominated by very different agendas. The contemporary reality of a globalized world and the influence of the Great Divergence thesis have inspired a stream of stimulating new historical studies. Simultaneously, they have forced historians to consider anew the place of social science theories and quantitative methods

in their discipline. Studies of a global scope often require the use of sources and methods that most historians have not considered since the onset of the “cultural turn.” The two books reviewed here offer a nice demonstration of what a discipline that hopes to participate in this new historical discourse must be prepared to incorporate into its portfolio of research methods.

Roman Studer's book bears a title that might be thought a bit too grand for its actual subject matter, but it provides a fine illustration of how large theses in Eurasian history can actually be tested with specific historical data. Studer takes on the core Great Divergence claim of pre-1800 equivalence in economic performance among the major economies of Eurasia. How can that claim be tested? Studer reasons that an economy's overall level of development can be measured by the extent of its market integration. There can be no significant division of labor (Adam Smith's measure of development) without markets integrated over an extensive area that allow for specialization among producers and that convey the fruits of this specialization to consumers via lower and more stable prices. Therefore, if the Great Divergence claim can be given credence, the price behavior of markets for basic commodities such as wheat and rice should reveal comparable levels of integration. Studer proceeds to test this proposition for market prices in Europe and India.

In order to describe and analyze the market prices for these two locales, Studer employs techniques long used by economists. Economists have relied on standard statistical tests for market integration: coefficients of correlation measure co-movement between pairs of price series; coefficients of variation measure the volatility of price series; price convergence (a reduction of price differentials between price series) measures the reduction of the friction of transaction costs on markets; and, finally, error correlation models measure the speed with which a given market responds to a disequilibrating price shock.

In order to successfully conduct this investigation, Studer needed reliable data stretching back into the early modern era—long, unbroken series of annual average prices—for the two subcontinents. European price data are abundant, although Studer enriches his study with Swiss data in order to de-emphasize the advanced markets of northwest Europe as a comparator. His main historical challenge was to locate and properly utilize the far scarcer Indian market prices. This review cannot supply a full evaluation of the comparability of the Indian price records to those available for most of Europe. Studer located fifty-four Indian price series, although the pre-nineteenth-century series remain scarce and the annual data seem often to be based on very few observations. The data are not ideal, but they far exceed what has hitherto been available. Moreover, Studer takes care in his statistical analyses to “handicap” the more abundant and fine-grained European data so as to avoid reaching results that are simply a reflection of differences in data density and quality.

Studer walks his reader through the statistical techniques and offers intuitive interpretations that should be accessible to any interested reader. His findings are clear

and appear robust: Indian grain markets showed very low levels of integration by every measure used until after the mid-nineteenth century. Before then India's grain trade was essentially local; annual price fluctuations were extremely high (two to four times higher than in European markets); differences in price levels between markets were pronounced and persistent, and prices between market pairs were essentially uncorrelated. European markets reveal a fairly steady increase in integration throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, indeed, from the early seventeenth century. By Studer's measures, the Great Divergence between Europe and India "needs to be shifted back to the seventeenth century, if not earlier" (182). Nearly as remarkable as the poor integration of Indian markets before the mid-nineteenth century is Studer's finding of rapid improvement in all his indicators thereafter, reaching a rough parity with European standards by 1900. Our confidence in the benefits to India of "Smithian growth" would be greater if the evidence for market integration had been paired with a reduction in the incidence of famines. These seem only to have intensified, which suggests that there is more to the process of market integration than Studer has been able to tell. But his book is to be recommended as a clear and accessible example of recasting a grand historical claim as a testable proposition, assembling the needed evidence, and deploying relevant statistical methods to conduct fair tests. As things now stand, it is hard to see how the claim of economic equivalence between India, or advanced parts of India, and Europe, or even its mountainous Helvetic zone, can be sustained.

Philip T. Hoffman's impressive book offers a very different kind of analytical history. His title, *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?*, refers to military rather than economic achievement, and while he assembles quantitative data to support some of his claims, the heart of his study is an application of game theory to the behavior of rulers and, hence, to the question posed in the book's title.

Europe, Hoffman argues, "conquered the world" because it mastered better than rivals elsewhere the "gunpowder technologies"—the firearms, artillery, armed ships, bombardment-resistant fortifications, and associated organizational methods and tactics—that spread across Eurasia from late medieval times. If rulers across Eurasia all had access to and made use of gunpowder technologies, why did the Europeans alone come to excel in those technologies' further development and effective use?

Hoffman's approach to this big historical question is to search for a model of competitive behavior that can be applied to differentiate among Eurasia's many bellicose polities. European rulers, he concludes, did not simply compete with each other—this was true everywhere—but they engaged in a special, intensive form of competition akin to a tournament. He then develops a formal tournament model to predict the behavior of participants (rulers) who faced all of its incentives and constraints, and the behavior of rulers who confronted historical situations in which one or more of the tournament's conditions were absent. In short, Hoffman has taken an enormous

question, reduced it to its essential elements, and fashioned a model consistent with these elements.

A tournament differs from ordinary competitive behavior in its intensity. The prize to the winner must be valuable and indivisible (so that compromise or "partial victory" is unavailable); the cost of mobilizing the resources needed to be competitive must be low (the rulers must not face a hegemon enjoying overwhelming strength who makes the cost of competition prohibitive); and the rulers engaged in tournaments over time must make use of the same military technology (warfare against nomadic horsemen and archers diverts resources and attention from the development of gunpowder technology). Standing behind these conditions is the existence and maintenance over time of a fragmented political space in which the warring states are of commensurate size, and where the participating rulers can vie for victory without fearing complete extinction in the case of defeat.

Hoffman's achievement is to develop a formal tournament model that incorporates these elements. He describes it intuitively in the text, reserving the mathematical notation for appendixes. He is then able to show that the incentives and constraints facing participants in the "games" of his model will lead to the devotion of more resources to warfare and more attention to the development of infrastructures of resource mobilization. Military technology continues to evolve until the nineteenth century, when Hoffman's model must be adjusted somewhat via "learning by doing." That is, a state can only improve its gunpowder technologies by experience in war, specifically in war against enemies using the same technology.

Outside Europe, rulers often fought against archers on horseback and/or faced a hegemon, both of which diluted the flow of resources to warfare and the learning process. It also affected the associated development of state institutions for resource mobilization. To a greater extent (China, Japan, and India) or a lesser one (Russia and the Ottoman Empire), all non-European polities ineluctably fell behind in military technology because of the different incentives they faced in making decisions about how to engage in war. They were not less belligerent but "learned" less from their warfare.

Hoffman now has the answer to his question, but only a proximate answer. He stresses that the "ultimate causes" of the tournament model's applicability to Europe reside in its political history. By this he means something rather different from what a traditional political historian would expect. This is not a history tossed about by unrestrained contingency, but a set of political practices and interests (emerging from the Germanic tribes, Carolingian institutions, and papal ambitions) that congeal to set society on a "path-dependent" course. Such a course is not immutable, but tends to reinforce itself over time. In short, Hoffman's political history is a causal force in its own right. It sets the framework in which the rulers faced, generation after generation, game after game, a set of incentives that encouraged them to fight for the prizes, invest in the "fixed cost" of fiscal systems and military establishments, and expend vast resources on war-

fare. They thereby advanced the proficiency of their military technologies, but in Hoffman's telling, they advanced much more than that. Via learning by doing the European states also developed the fiscal and political institutions that made the tournaments possible.

To return to economic history: Did Europe's development of military superiority over the rest of the world make it rich? Does conquest and the threat of conquest account for Europe's "primitive accumulation of capital" and later industrial revolution? Hoffman, who extends his model to incorporate nineteenth-century developments, sees a rather different connection between military power and economic development. For him, the path-dependent political history referred to above is jointly responsible for both Europe's growing military superiority and the economic success that reveals itself ultimately in the industrial revolution. Following very different paths and using very different methods, Hoffman and Studer offer a single answer to the question of when the economic paths of Europe diverged from the rest of Eurasia. The differences revealed around 1800 were the product neither of recent nor of fortuitous events, but were the product of deep differences of long standing.

Neither of these studies is without problems. But both make very substantial contributions that historians should take seriously. Nonetheless, doing so will require engaging with the methodologies that have given their authors the capacity to address major questions in global comparative history.

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## ASIA

DAVID A. JOHNSON. *New Delhi: The Last Imperial City*. (Britain and the World.) New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp. xv, 261. Cloth \$95.00, e-book \$69.99.

Over the last decade or so, Delhi has been the focus of a growing body of historical research (most notably, Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture and Urbanism* [2005]; Stephen Legg, *Spaces of Colonialism: Delhi's Urban Governmentalities* [2007]; and Awadhendra Saran, *In the City, Out of Place: Nuisance, Pollution, and Dwelling in Delhi, c. 1850–2000* [2014]). David A. Johnson's study differs significantly from this historiography in its focus and approach, examining the creation of New Delhi against the wider backdrop of Britain's global empire in the early twentieth century. The decision to invest in this project, Johnson argues, was made in "response to the global challenges of a new geopolitical reality in which Britain was just one among many powerful industrial states" (5). Bringing about a closer alignment of British and Indian interests became a pressing political challenge for the imperial elite at this juncture. Hence, New Delhi "displayed a double narrative of promised liberation and continued colonial dependence." It was simultaneously a "site of traditional imperial authority" and a "symbol of Britain's willingness to

address, and thus hopefully control, the political demands of its Indian subjects" (6).

Johnson thus frames the history of New Delhi as "a British imperial story set in India" (12). The first part of the book (chaps. 2–4) delineates the internal debates within the imperial establishment regarding the decision to relocate the capital of British India from Calcutta to Delhi. These debates represented two rival conceptions of Britain's Indian empire. Those who supported a new capital argued that the rising tide of Indian nationalism called for a more inclusive approach to governance and the granting of strategic concessions to educated Indians. New Delhi was an opportunity to reset the course of British rule in India "along safe and sound lines" by increasing the representation of natives in the council chambers of government (51). But these ambitious plans were furiously opposed in and out of Parliament by the old India hands, for whom the decision was a stark acknowledgment of the British failure to deal forcefully with Indian nationalists. The new capital's cost and its potentially adverse impact on financial markets in India and London also triggered heated arguments in Parliament about "the place of India in Britain's global system of trade" (82).

The second part of the book (chaps. 5–7) highlights the contradictions and conflicts that marked the making of the new capital. One bone of contention was its location. The planning committee unexpectedly rejected the existing area of British settlement, the "Civil Lines" north of old Delhi. Among the factors that influenced the committee's decision were perceived natural and manmade restrictions on future growth; the belief that the more northern location was more vulnerable to outbreaks of malaria; and a reluctance to build on an old Delhi site where the bitter memories of India's 1857 uprising and its repression had not entirely faded (87). Yet the desire to forge a new compact with Indian society was undercut by the authoritarian impulses that drove the project. For one, the crucial decisions about the construction of the capital were taken by Britain's viceroy Lord Hardinge (110). Hardinge's choice of Edward Lutyens as the principal architect was to cause him "a tremendous amount of anguish" on account of the latter's open contempt for Indian architecture (122). When the principal buildings of the new capital were finally completed, their amalgam of Western structural forms and Indian decorative motifs reproduced in stone the unequal relationship between the metropole and the colony.

The final chapter shows how land acquisition reflected the iniquities of colonial political economy. Customary rights of landless peasants were ignored and many of the Indian farmers in the areas earmarked for New Delhi lost their lands and livelihoods while large agrarian property owners benefited. At first, the colonial authorities sought to compensate smaller landowners with tracts of land elsewhere, but doctrinaire adherence to free market principles eventually led colonial authorities to merely *reserve* lands for dispossessed Delhi gentry who wished to purchase them. Ironically, then, even though reform-minded colonial officials "had become convinced that